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WITH SUGGESTIONS

HOW TO OVERCOME IT.

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THE TOBACCO VICE.

BY HANNAH McL. SHEPARD.



There is no vice, no evil, affecting one-half of humanity that does not also influence the other half. The Siamese twins were not more sensitively organized in respect to each other than are men and women in their generic relations. If the standard of morality is low among men it is never high among women. If disease prevails among one sex the other cannot be sound and healthy. If men speculate, gamble, and run to excesses, women will be extravagant, frivolous, and dissipated. Whatever vice prevails among one sex has its counterpart in the other, and the evil effects are felt equally by both.

Intemperance, insanity, and scrofulous diseases are frightfully on the increase. To mitigate the evils caused by them is the work of physicians and humanitarians; their effort should be to remove their causes. There is no doubt that the last two have their not remote cause in the first. Underlying them all is an almost entirely false system of living and estimate of the values of life, which induces greediness for wealth, overstrain in its pursuit, recourse to stimulants to keep it up, and narcotics to subdue excitement. Of the poisons thus brought into use, not the least harmful is tobacco. I believe its pernicious influence on civilized communities quite equals that of alcohol and opium, and that it will be found even more difficult to overcome. Indeed, the task seems almost hopeless. Whiskey drinking and opium eating are considered as vices, but a man may smoke and snuff and eat tobacco, even to excess, and yet maintain "good

and regular standing" in the church and as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus. I know one clergyman who smokes from twelve to twenty cigars a day, and another who chews never less than one ten-cent paper of tobacco in twenty-four hours. I have heard both of these men say that they would be unable, utterly unfit, to write sermons or study their discourses without tobacco. The man who wrote his appeal to sinners under the stimulus of gin or laudanum would lose caste as a minister. Why does not he who chooses some other excitant as well? I suppose because the baleful effects of gin and opium are more visible than those of tobacco. They are not, however, a whit less baleful because of their obscurity. Nor are the effects really obscure. Those who understand the nature of tobacco poison can readily perceive its ravages in the individual and the race. Like the Canada thistle, it has taken such a hold on American ground that it seems an almost hopeless task to attempt uprooting it. But women should at least make the effort, and in season and out of season show it up in all its ugliness and poison vileness. Almost every business block in every town, village, and city has its tobacco shop; every gin-mill, rum-hole, restaurant and hotel has its cigar-stand. Bakeries and confectionery shops have a showcase devoted to the weed. The druggist has his Havanas beside the soda-water fountain, and grocery-shops, big and little, find it a staple commodity for trade. The news-stands and stationery shops are not complete in their appointments without it. It is the great American necessity. Even our legislative halls are decorated with vile cuspidors, hideous boxes of saw-dust, a monstrous necessity to prevent the defiling of the floors with tobacco juice. A lady cannot sit at the reading tables of the Congressional Library without coming in contact with and having her olfactories offended by the spittoons which are provided for consumers of tobacco. It thrives upon its native soil. It was not known in Europe and Asia until after the discovery of America; nor was it tolerated there without a struggle against it. James I

of England published a severe protest against its use. Pope Urban VIII thundered a bull against taking snuff and smoking. One of the Czars of Russia punished smokers with the bastinado, and by cutting their noses. The first Shah of Persia, in the seventeenth century, issued a decree that all soldiers found using it should have their lips and noses cut off and be burned alive. A sultan ordered that every one caught smoking should have his nose pierced with his pipe and be condemned to wear it.

In the whole world there are now raised more than four billion pounds of tobacco yearly, or about four pounds to every man, woman, and child. Six million of acres are devoted to its cultivation. In all tropical and semi-tropical countries it has become a staple production. In these climates the pipe or cigar is perpetually seen in the mouth, the enervation of nicotine is added to the enervation of climate, and its effects are perceptible in the deterioration of the races. In Turkey, India, Siam, Burmah, all classes and both sexes, of all ages, from toddling infants up, smoke. In Russia, women smoke to great excess ; half a pound per diem is no unusual amount, and one Russian lady known here as a profound writer on occult science, and a medium of great power, has told me that sometimes she smokes quite a pound in twenty-four hours !

It is not only, however, in tropical and semi-tropical countries that the land which should be cultivated for food is prostituted and defertilized to the production of tobacco. Not only in the South of our own country is the green earth thus wrested from its proper use, but the valleys of the Connecticut, Mohawk and Ohio are every year being encroached upon for tobacco culture. While the ground will grow it, tobacco pays better than corn, and if strychnine paid better than tobacco the farmers would raise that and sell it to their next-door neighbor. The world, over its length and breath, is demoralized with the haste to be rich, and so emulating the example of him who killed the golden-egged goose, the farmers

raise tobacco poison, though they know it saps the life out of their land, and instils poison into their own blood and that of their children. These men and their sons chew, smoke and snuff it, and investigation shows that the women in the Northern tobacco-raising districts, as well as in the South where it has long been practiced, are gradually becoming addicted to its use. One comes to a realization of the extreme filthiness of the tobacco habit when he sees a woman's mouth polluted by it. Like cursing or obscenity, it is thrown into hideous relief when it has a woman for back-ground. As a rule, however, our women are no more tobacco users than they are drunken or obscene. At the North, especially, they have opposed its use by the men of their households; not, however, on the right grounds. They object to its odor in their curtains, to its general filthiness, and to the smell of it on the breath of their husbands or sons. There their objections begin and end. The result is that if *pater familias* is amiable and can afford it, he desecrates a room by consecrating it to his meerschaum or Cuban god, and there he and the boys and their friends make the air as blue as they like, stifle themselves with smoke, make the matting gray with ashes to their heart's content, and spittoons filthy beyond description with quids, cigar ends and spittle—so abominable as to be an insult to any decent housemaid. If the smoking-room cannot be compassed, then the amiable man, or the one whose experience has taught him the "the value of peace and quietness," smokes in the street, at the office, makes "a blessed old chimney of himself" on the piazza or in the back yard, and throws away the stump of his cigar, or knocks the ashes from his pipe as he puts his foot on the home door-mat. But one way or another most of the men of to-day smoke either at home or abroad. There has been found no argument nor affection strong enough to dissuade them from it. Woman's war has never yet been in real earnest against this vice; there has been no *live issue* in it. We have winked at it as sweethearts, and then quarreled with it as wives, because it inconvenient-

enced us. We have not dealt fearlessly and honestly with it. We should, maidens and matrons, set our faces in dead earnest against it, and fight it as we would any other vicious or immoral thing, because the men and boys of America are poisoned, enervated, demoralized, and demented by it. It is ruining the health of our husbands, sons and brothers, lowering the standard of manhood in our country, sapping the very foundations of our strength and greatness.

We have no proper idea of the extent of evil induced by this poison, or we would with one accord rise up against it and wage such war upon it that no man who cared for the respect of woman would dare to use it in her presence or out of it. We would take as great care to preserve our sons from this pernicious habit as from any other vice. Women have this matter in their hands if they choose to use their power, and if they once realized how great the evil is, I can but think they would use it.

Tobacco is poison. It is as virulent in its active principle as strychnine or Prussic acid. In scientific enumerations it ranks with monk's-hood, hellebore, and deadly nightshade. It belongs to a class of narcotic stimulants which can never be properly or safely used, except as a medicine, and therapeutics seldom call for its use. Arsenic and strychnine are prescribed an hundred times where tobacco is "exhibited" once. Like all poisons it is deleterious in every respect to the life principle. Dyspepsia, neuralgia, hypochondriasis, and physical paralysis are among its minor evil effects. It induces insanity, morbid tempers of all sorts, and vitiates the blood, filling it with scrofula. It is well known to be a provocative of abnormal thirst. Its use exhausts the salivary glands; produces a parched condition of the system which refuses to be satisfied with water or emollient drinks, and demands stimulants.

The wise men of former times were denunciatory of its use, and attributed its origin to evil sources. Sylvester ingeniously makes it derive its name from the god

of drunkenness—*Tw Baxxw*—Tobacco. Raphael Thorius attributes its discovery to Bacchus, Silenus, and the Satyrs—representatives of drunkenness, gluttony, and lust.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his admirable treatise on tobacco, remarks that “so inseparable an attendant is drinking or smoking that in some places the same word expresses both acts. Thus, *peend* in the Bengalee language signifies to drink and to smoke.” It was Dr. Clark who said that a fitting sacrifice to the Devil would be a roasted pig stuffed with tobacco. It really received its name from Tabacca, a province in St. Domingo. Its active principle, *nicotine*, was named for Nicot, ambassador of France to Portugal in 1560, who introduced it from Portugal to France.

Dr. Rush says: “Smoking and chewing tobacco, by rendering water and other simple liquids insipid to the taste, dispose very much to the stronger stimulus of ardent spirits; hence the practice of smoking cigars has been followed by the use of brandy and water as a common drink.”

The amount of intemperance arising from the use of this noxious weed, if searched out, would be found truly startling. One writer on the subject, who has made use of abundant statistics, is of the opinion that not less than *nine-tenths* of the drunkards are made so by the use of tobacco. Its effect on the nervous system is exceedingly powerful, arousing it to unnatural activity or stupefying it. Like opium, it may excite the mind to abnormal action for a while, but reaction always takes place in which there is a corresponding stupor or paralysis of action. Great users of tobacco are almost invariably irritable when the immediate effect of the poison has passed away, and can be kept good-humored by keeping the cigar between their lips or the quid in their mouth. Its effect upon the glandular system is not less evil than on the nervous. If there is any tendency to tuberculosis this enemy searches it out, excites it and sends its victim to the grave by rapid stages. Whatever

weak spot there is in the constitution, this insidious thief creeps into, mining and sapping about it until the fabric crumbles into the dust. It produces cancer. It produces insanity. The natural result of vibration between excessive action of the brain and corresponding depression is mental unbalancing and overthrow. Memory is weakened, the perceptions are blunted, cowardice is engendered, the power of the will is enervated. In some stages of its action it excites the passions abnormally, and later they are deadened as unnaturally. Virility is expended in smoke.

The moral man, as well as the physical and intellectual, is injured by this poison. Observe the nations that have been using tobacco the longest time—Spain, Italy, Mexico, for instance. There is no doubt they have been dwarfed in every sense by this pernicious habit, this poison narcotic. We are not many generations from the brave, staunch men and women who landed at Plymouth Rock, but who will say that our blood is as pure as theirs; who will say that we are as moral and conscientious as a race as they? And how many generations more will it take, at the rate we are imbibing poison, to make our blood as cheap and as mean as a Mexican greaser's?

Tobacco poisons the blood of the men who use it. But that is not the whole nor the worst of it. The trouble does not die with them. Their children are inheritors of the diseases sown in the systems of their parents by the pernicious habit. The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. Every generation is deteriorated from its predecessor. Children inherit the taste for it. In THE ALPHA, a few months ago, a case was given of a child who pined and refused nourishment after being weaned, its stomach rejecting all food, until to quiet it its father put his cigar between its lips, when it greedily sucked it, and under the stimulus was able to take the pap and food prepared for it. It recovered from its illness for the time, but could not be kept well without tobacco, and event-

ually was dwarfed and made imbecile by its excessive use. A child, just weaned, in my neighborhood, on Capitol Hill, whose father is an inveterate smoker, and is so permeated with it that his presence is disgusting, is cross and disquieted unless it is allowed the old black cutty its father smokes to play with. This pipe, containing nicotine enough to kill a dozen cats, the child sucks and is comforted.

There is not a doubt that many of the diseases of women are aggravated not only, but frequently originate from marital relations with men who are poisoned through and through with tobacco. Chemical analysis has proved that *all* the secretions of men addicted to smoking contain poisonous quantities of nicotine. This poison acts in a doubly effective manner upon their wives. Nervous and scirrhus diseases are the result. The glandular system is affected by it and acrid discharges, ulcerations, polypus and cancers result. Surely we have reason on our side when we wage war on this vice ; for vice it is. Any habit that brings in its train so many evils is sinful and should be so regarded, so denounced, so avoided.

The approaches of this frightful evil have been so insidious that it has gotten into our very strongholds before we were aware of its character. It is not, as we have seen, a vice of bad men only, but of godly men as well. Good men have even written in its praise. No one who has read the history of the Scottish Church will deny the devout piety of the Erskines, yet Rev. Ralph Erskine, one of the most excellent men of the last century wrote religious verses in praise of the vile weed which has proven itself pernicious to soul as well as body, verses which seem little short of blasphemous, though they were written in a devotional spirit.

From time to time we are appealed to by persons desirous of quitting the use of tobacco to give some prescriptions that will make the weaning sure and easy.

First. The way to stop using tobacco or whisky is just

to quit. The person who has not will power sufficient to make a resolve and keep to it, when he is convinced that right is on the side of the resolution, and wrong on the other side, is hardly worth saving. Chewing chamomile flowers has helped to allay the gnawing at the stomach. Homœopathy *Chamomilla* and *nux vomica* are likewise aids in allaying suffering.

Second. The suffering of the time during which the craving for the poison continues, may be mitigated by chewing chamomile flowers, and frequent rinsing of the mouth with pure water. A fast of two days, or perhaps three, capped by a tepid bath and subsequent thorough sponging, has been known to perfect the cure. But the determined *will* not to yield to recurring temptation must always be brought into requisition.

In Mrs. Slenke's book "The Darwins" is the following very good suggestion for the cure of "The Tobacco Habit :"

"Stop to-night. Don't use any to-morrow. The first day will not be so hard. In the afternoon your memory will be a little doubtful. You can't exactly tell whether it was one or three brothers that came over. You are not quite sure if your grandfather came from the East or the West when he settled here. But be patient. The morning of the third day comes the trial. Now go and take an old-fashioned *alcoholic* vapor bath, or a Russian or a Turkish bath, and you will be comfortable for one day. There will be no dryness of the mouth or disturbance of the secretions. The next day, though in trouble again, you will not feel as bad as the day before. Take another sweat, take a third, and so on. Sweating does not hurt any one. After three or four thorough sweats you will go off under easy sail, and will have no further trouble from your memory."

While you avoid temptation these rules will help to make you a braver man than Cæsar. Though the battle may not be always fought and won in so short a time, persevere.

A friend sends the following happy suggestion, effectual too :

From the New York *Witness* of February 10th I copy the following remedy, simple, and in one case at least effectual : "On first rising in the morning rinse the mouth with cold water and after each meal, and during the day as often as the hankering for tobacco returns, retaining the water in the mouth as long as convenient. In a short time the desire for tobacco was entirely removed."



